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LESSON LEARNED

Incident Site Management: Establishing Procedures to Reduce Radio Noise in Command Post Facilities

SUMMARY

Jurisdictions should consider establishing procedures to reduce excessive radio noise in command post (CP) facilities. Noise generated by radio traffic can hinder communication among personnel within a CP facility.

DESCRIPTION

On April 28, 2006, Volusia County, Florida, hosted a full-scale exercise (FSE) simulating simultaneous terrorist attacks on two cargo trains carrying hazardous materials (HazMat) through different parts of the county. The FSE was designed to improve cooperation among agencies likely to respond to a Volusia County terrorism rail incident. The FSE focused on HazMat response and the triage and treatment of victims at two railroad incident scenes. A Volusia County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) command vehicle served as the unified command post (UCP) during the FSE.

The VCSO command vehicle consisted of a single room in which personnel communicated on several radios simultaneously. This radio traffic generated excessive noise, which made it difficult for command staff to conduct face-to-face conversations inside the UCP facility. Command staff could not effectively communicate with the incident commander or conduct strategy briefings inside the UCP. Following the FSE, Volusia County Emergency Management (VCEM) recommended that all personnel operating in a CP facility be required to wear earpieces when using radios. In addition, VCEM suggested that CPs provide an adjacent "quiet room" without radios where command staff can communicate free from interruptions.

Jurisdictions should consider establishing procedures to reduce excessive radio noise in CP facilities. Noise generated by radio traffic can hinder communication among personnel within a CP facility.

CITATION

Volusia County Emergency Management. *Volusia County Terrorism Rail Exercise: After Action Report*. 09 Aug 2006.

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